



use. On the Public Safety Application Form, the appellant had indicated that when he drank alcohol, he usually had one drink. However, during his interview with Dr. Kanen, the appellant was asked how often he had five or more alcoholic drinks to which he replied one or two weekends per month. He has “cut back” on his drinking upon his failure to pass the psychological examination. On the Inwald Personality Inventory – II, the appellant answered true to the statement that he could easily drink a “six pack” or four or five alcoholic drinks. The appellant was provided with the opportunity to explain the statement to Dr. Kanen. He reported that he could drink that much, but he does not. Moreover, Dr. Kanen noted that the appellant’s driving issues, an “excessive number of jobs” in the past 10 years, his alcohol use, and defensiveness contributed to a score on the Inwald Personality Inventory – II of “unlikely to recommend for public safety employment based on the estimated psychologist recommendation.” With regard to defensiveness, Dr. Kanen indicated that this response style suggested that the appellant had limited self-insight or a preference for portraying himself as socially desirable. On the Rorschach Ink Blot Method, the appellant did not give a sufficient number of responses, and the number of responses suggested defensiveness and guardedness.

Dr. Kanen determined that “[g]iven his defensiveness and the self-report that he has five or more drinks one or two weekends per month, his history of having 10 or more drinks at least on 10 occasions, the termination of his employment . . . having quit five or more jobs in the last 10 years, driving 116 miles per hour in a 65 mile per hour zone, and scoring in the category not likely to recommend for employment in a public safety/security position based on the estimated psychologist recommendation on the [Inwald Personality Inventory – II], raise serious concerns about his ability to perform the duties of a firefighter without incident.” Therefore, Dr. Kanen concluded that the appellant was not psychologically suitable for employment as a Fire Fighter.

## CONCLUSION

The Job Specification for the title of Fire Fighter is the official job description for such positions within the Civil Service system. According to the specification, Fire Fighters are entrusted with the safety and maintenance of expensive equipment and vehicles and are responsible for the lives of the public and other officers with whom they work. Some of the skills and abilities required to perform the job include the ability to work closely with people, including functioning as a team member, to exercise tact or diplomacy and display compassion, understanding and patience, the ability to understand and carry out instructions, and the ability to think clearly and apply knowledge under stressful conditions and to handle more than one task at a time. A Fire Fighter must also be able to follow procedures and perform routine and repetitive tasks and must use sound judgment and logical thinking when responding to many emergency situations. Examples include conducting step-by-step searches of buildings, placing gear in appropriate locations to expedite response time, performing preparatory operations to ensure delivery of water at a fire, adequately

maintaining equipment and administering appropriate treatment to victims at the scene of a fire, *e.g.*, preventing further injury, reducing shock, and restoring breathing. The ability to relay and interpret information clearly and accurately is of utmost importance to Fire Fighters as they are required to maintain radio communications with team members during rescue and firefighting operations.

In the present matter, the Commission agreed with the Panel to refer the appellant for an independent psychological evaluation. As set forth above, Dr. Kanen interviewed the appellant and performed applicable tests to determine his psychological fitness. Dr. Kanen found serious issues with the appellant's behavioral history and the appellant's consumption of alcohol and his inconsistent reporting of the same. Dr. Kanen's assessment of the appellant is consistent with the preemployment evaluation regarding the appellant's history and confirms the Panel's concerns in that regard. The Commission emphasizes that, in addition to his own evaluation and testing, Dr. Kanen conducts an independent review of the Panel's Report and Recommendation and the raw data, recommendations, and conclusions drawn by the various evaluators prior to rendering his own conclusions and recommendations, which are based firmly on his expertise in the field of psychology and his experience in evaluating the psychological suitability of hundreds of applicants for employment in law enforcement and public safety positions. While the record demonstrates that the appellant is currently a volunteer firefighter for another jurisdiction, the Commission cannot ignore the weight of the psychological recommendations, which were confirmed by various tests, that the appellant is not suitable for employment as a Fire Fighter.

Therefore, having considered the record and the independent Confidential Psychological Report and Recommendation issued thereon, and having made an independent evaluation of the same, including a review of the Job Specification for the position sought, the Commission accepts and adopts the findings and conclusions as contained in the independent Confidential Psychological Evaluation. Accordingly, the appellant's appeal is denied.

### **ORDER**

The Commission finds that the appointing authority has met its burden of proof that N.R. is psychologically unfit to perform effectively the duties of a Fire Fighter and, therefore, the Commission orders that his name be removed from the subject eligible list.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON  
THE 23<sup>RD</sup> DAY OF AUGUST, 2023

*Allison Chris Myers*

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